

# Advantages and Disadvantages of Focus Groups

## What is a focus group?

A focus group is a structured discussion in which a small group of people (5-12), led by a trained facilitator, discuss their perceptions, opinions, attitudes, and experiences.

## Should you conduct a focus group?

Keep the following in mind while deciding on whether to conduct a focus group:

### Advantages

Relatively inexpensive

Individuals are more likely to provide candid responses

Individuals build on each other's ideas and comments

Provides opportunity to explore new or unique perspectives

Useful for identifying participants' needs

Useful for assessing program effectiveness

### Disadvantages

Requires a trained facilitator, preferably from the target population and not affiliated with WIC

Generates a lot of qualitative data that may be difficult to analyze

Outspoken individuals may dominate discussion

Quality of the discussion and usefulness depend on skill of facilitator

Findings cannot be generalized to larger population since group is not a random sample

## Basics of Conducting Focus Groups

<http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/focusgrp.htm>

## Other Resources:

- *The Focus Group Guidebook*, David L. Morgan, Sage Publications
- *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, Richard A. Krueger, Sage Publications